



# In Iowa's Interest:

## Medicaid Expansion Is the Right Choice for Iowa

*by Senator Tom Harkin*

A growing number of governors, including many Republicans, are choosing to expand Medicaid in their states, taking advantage of the extremely generous terms in the Affordable Care Act.

Under the Affordable Care Act, if states expand Medicaid to everyone up to 133 percent of the federal poverty line, the federal government pays the full cost of those newly eligible beneficiaries for the first three years and no less than 90 percent of the costs after that. That is a great deal for our state, or for any state – which is exactly why so many governors are signing on.

There is no question that Medicaid expansion is the right choice for Iowa. It would provide coverage for tens of thousands of uninsured Iowans. And the more than 60,000 Iowans currently covered by IowaCare would get much better benefits and improved access to doctors and hospitals.

One Iowan told me in a letter how Medicaid enabled her to receive many mental health and rehabilitative services for a disability, and that this helped her to go to school, obtain a degree, and rejoin the workforce. Another Iowan told me that IowaCare is not sufficient because the program does not cover mental health services.

Iowa's hospitals and providers, which are eager to save untold millions in uncompensated care, are also encouraged by an expansion of Medicaid.

Expanding Medicaid is also the right choice for our state's fiscal health. Under the expansion, independent analysts project that Iowa Medicaid spending would decrease by 2.6 percent, and state and local governments would save more than \$530 million over the next decade.

No wonder so many governors are signing up for Medicaid expansion. Gov. Rick Scott of Florida said, "While the federal government is committed to paying 100 percent of the cost, I cannot in good conscience deny Floridians that needed access to health care." Gov. Jan Brewer of Arizona argued that the savings to her state from expanding Medicaid would free up general-fund money for higher education.

Last November, Iowans voted to reelect President Obama and rejected the candidate who would have repealed the Affordable Care Act. Since then, a growing number of governors have said that Medicaid expansion is not about "liberal" or "conservative," it's about common sense.

I could not agree more. It's time to bring the full benefits of the Affordable Care Act to all Iowans.

For more information, please visit <http://www.harkin.senate.gov/> or follow Senator Harkin on Facebook and Twitter.